

# Secondhand Smoke, Asthma, and Other Respiratory Problems

- ❑ Tobacco smoke is one of the worst triggers of asthma symptoms. If you are a smoker and have asthma, you must quit as soon as possible. If someone in your family has asthma, it is vital that you make strides to maintain a smoke free home at all times.<sup>1</sup>
- ❑ Secondhand smoke is also a risk factor for new cases of asthma in children who have not previously exhibited asthma symptoms -- increasing the likelihood of developing asthma.<sup>2</sup>
- ❑ Each year up to 26,000 kids develop asthma from secondhand smoke.<sup>3</sup>
- ❑ It is estimated that up to 1 million children have aggravated asthma symptoms due to secondhand smoke exposure.<sup>4</sup>
- ❑ Each year in the U.S., an estimated 11 percent of all asthma cases and more than half a million physician visits for asthma are due to smoking in the home.<sup>5</sup>
- ❑ Exposure to secondhand smoke increases the risk of lower respiratory tract infections such as bronchitis and pneumonia. EPA estimates between 150,000 and 300,000 of these cases annually in infants and young children are attributable to secondhand smoke. Of these cases, between 7,500 and 15,000 will result in hospitalization.<sup>6</sup>
- ❑ Because a child's body is still developing, exposure to the poisons in secondhand smoke can hinder lung growth and result in decreased lung function.<sup>7</sup>
- ❑ Among the most common and firmly established adverse health effects of secondhand smoke are irritation of the eyes, nose, and upper respiratory tract. This irritation may result in reddened, itchy, watery eyes and a burning sensation of the eyes, nose, and throat.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Andrew Weinstein, MD, FAAAAI, and Chair of the AAAAI's Quality of Care for Asthma Committee; <sup>2</sup>(Parrott, K. and Guevin, J., 1999, Healthy Indoor Air For America's Homes, [www.montana.edu:80/www/air/secondhand\\_smoke.htm](http://www.montana.edu:80/www/air/secondhand_smoke.htm); Environmental Protection Agency, 2001: Asthma Triggers: Secondhand Smoke, [www.epa.gov/iaq/asthma/triggers/sbs.html](http://www.epa.gov/iaq/asthma/triggers/sbs.html); <sup>3</sup>National Cancer Institute, "Health Effects of Exposure to Environmental Tobacco Smoke: The Report of the California Environmental Protection Agency, Smoking and Tobacco Control Monograph no. 10" Bethesda, MD, US Department of Health and Human Services, National Institutes of Health, National Cancer Institute, NIH Pub. No 99-4645 1999; <sup>4</sup> Association of State and Territorial Health Officials, (ASTHO) [www.astho.org](http://www.astho.org), and USEPA (1992 Respiratory Health Effects of Passive Smoking: Lung Cancer and other disorders. p. 8-13 EPA/600/6-90/006F, NCI 1999; <sup>5</sup> American Academy of Pediatrics, 2000; <sup>6</sup> Environmental Protection Agency, 1993a, [www.epa.gov/iaq/pubs/etstf.html](http://www.epa.gov/iaq/pubs/etstf.html); <sup>7</sup>American Lung Association, 2000c: Secondhand Smoke and Children, [www.lungusa.org/tobacco/secondkids\\_factsheet.html](http://www.lungusa.org/tobacco/secondkids_factsheet.html); <sup>8</sup>Centers for Disease Control, 2000b: Secondhand Smoke In Your Home, [www.cdc.gov/tobacco/research\\_data/environmental/etstfact3.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/research_data/environmental/etstfact3.htm) Centers for Disease Control, 2000a, Facts About Secondhand Smoke, Texas Dept. of Health, 1-800-345-8647.



**Maricopa County**  
Department of Public Health  
Tobacco Use Prevention Program